

M S S



SOMETIME  
IN  
WINTER

# MS S

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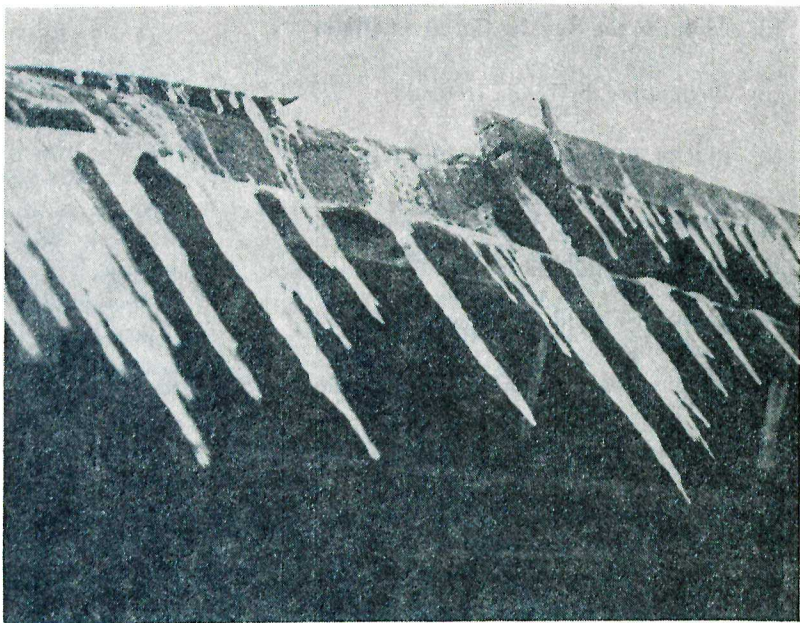
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\* Freshman Writing



## CHANDELIER OF ICE

Elisabeth Harter



Frances flung her scarf toreador-style over her shoulder and stepped out boldly to face the snow-enchanted day. It took only a moment for her to gain her balance on the icy stoop and adjust her eyes to the dazzling glare of sun on snow. Then before her unveiled vision appeared a new world, pure and infant. Overnight the neighborhood of dingy Cape Cods had been transformed into a fantasy land of sugar-frosted cottages.

Frances viewed the scene with amazement and tilted back her head to drink in the sheer, hopeful blue of the sky. Suddenly she drew in her breath. There, hanging three feet above her like the most delicate

of prism chandeliers, was an immense cluster of transparent icicles that trapped the beams of the sun and released them again as—yes, she was almost *sure* that's what she saw—as faint little rainbows.

So, thought Frances, miracles *do* happen overnight. She shook her head to clear it and set off for town, sifting the snow with each footstep. A miracle—that's what she was hoping for now. If miracles could ever happen, today was the day.

Frances' thoughts as she trod along were as agitated as the loose powder spiralling in the gusts of wind. She didn't know whether to feel exultation at the glorious day and the confirmation she was certain to receive soon, or despair. Mark wouldn't really be angry, would he? Of course, she had given her word in answer to his threats. What else could she have done? But everyone knows the method isn't 100% foolproof. And what if she *had* cheated a little—he wouldn't really mind. He should be ready by now to give up some of his independence, take on some responsibility. Perhaps their shaky relationship would be cemented. Mark would be really glad, too—

Frances tried to convince herself, but in the back of her mind something was chipping away at her optimism. She sighed. The mist of her breath billowed in front of her as in a dream, then cleared, revealing vividly to her mind a scene that had occurred fourteen years go, before she was married.

It was a beautiful, ripe day in autumn. Corn-shocks stood at attention in the fields of her father's farm as squadrons of birds skirred past overhead. She and Mark were sitting lazily in the warm sunlight of Indian summer, talking of nothing in particular and eating the first ruddy apples from the orchard. Suddenly the capricious breeze changed direction, mischievously caught Mark's hair, and blew his blond forelocks back off his forehead, exposing the high, bony dome which looked so fragile and transparent against the deep tan lingering yet on the rest of his face. Frances pointed at him and giggled. "You look like a peeled onion!"

Mark tried to glare at her, but he finally had to succumb to free and hearty laughter. Frances laughed with him. She loved him in this rare mood—it lifted his veil of distant moodiness just as the breeze had lifted his hair, and for a moment she thought she saw him clearly. Everything was perfect.

As the laughter subsided, Frances impulsively shook her apple-seeds into her hand and recited a rhyme she had learned as a girl. Mark smiled at her in amusement.

“One—he first meets you.  
Two—he does woo.  
Three—he says ‘dearest.’  
Four—he is true.  
Five—he is tender.  
Six—he sends roses.  
Seven—he kisses you.  
Eight—he proposes.  
Nine—he adores you.  
Ten—he is spouse.  
For the rest, count the children  
You’ll have in your house.  
One, two, three—”

Suddenly Mark’s jaw clamped tight. With a swift, rude motion he sent the seeds flying out of her hand. They lay scattered before her on the brown earth.

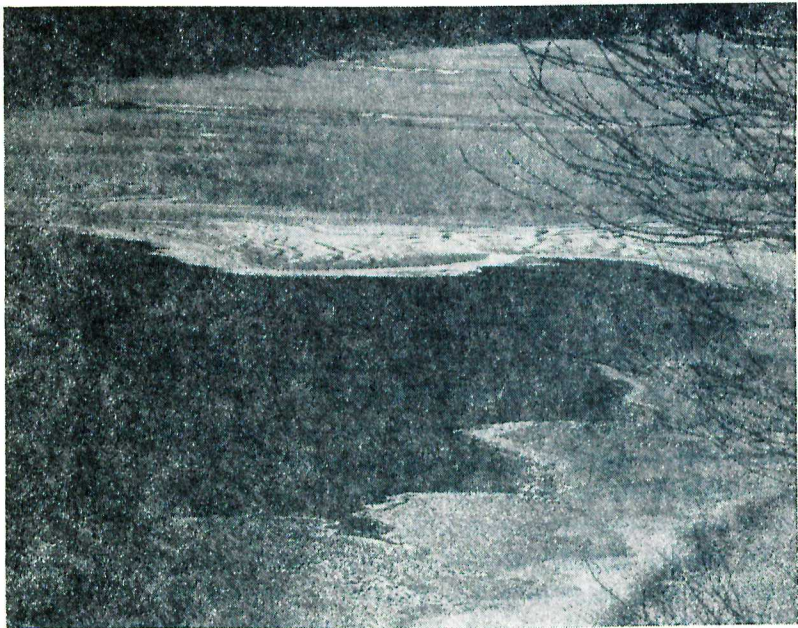
“Dr. David Gordon, MD”: the ice-varnished sign brought her back to the present. She had already reached her destination. With mixed feelings of hope and apprehension she creaked open the door and tip-toed up to the desk. The receptionist looked up and smiled knowingly.

“Hello, Mrs. Nicholson. Have a seat. The doctor will be with you shortly.”

Frances hung her snow-collared coat on a hook and found the only available chair in the crowded waiting-room. How long would she have to sit? Were all these people ahead of her? She picked up a magazine she’d read two months ago and glanced idly at the pictures. The piped-in music failed to soothe her now-anxious nerves, and her mind returned to its preoccupying thoughts.

Frances was fearful, but she tried to reason objectively. Perhaps she and Mark should never have married. Oh sure, they had been in love at first. Mark had needed and appreciated her cheerful stability







and warmth: she could draw him in from the cold regions of pessimistic introspection and dark brooding. She, on her part, had admired his intellectual powers and loved him simply because he needed her. She didn't understand him; but in fondness and, admittedly, in hope of reforming him, she could overlook his puzzling and eccentric moods. The rare and sacred glimpses she caught of him when the veil lifted were enough to reassure her. So, they were married.

Then the trouble started. For a while it didn't matter that he had insisted on an unfettered life to pursue his interest in writing. At that time she had also wanted some independence for her teaching. But then, when she had approached him about starting a family, he had gone into a rage.

"Mrs. Nicholson, the doctor will see you now in Room 3."

Frances jumped up nervously, dropping the magazine from her lap. Oh, please, she prayed as she placed it on the table and walked back to the room, please let a miracle happen today.

In Room 3, Dr. Gordon was bent over his desk filling out some forms. When she entered, he merely pointed to a chair without raising his head. "Have a seat, Mrs. Nicholson. I'll be with you in a minute." He continued to scribble rapidly. His efficiently professional manner added to her uneasiness. At last the doctor set aside the papers brusquely. He turned a frosty blue stare on her and rubbed his moustache seriously. He must have been trying to anticipate her reaction. Of course, Dr. Gordon was aware only dimly of her problems with Mark. Frances felt her heart pounding at the suspense.

Dr. Gordon smiled. "Well, little lady, the test results came in this morning. You're going to be a mother!"

She collapsed in the chair to let the words sink in. Now that there was no doubt, she could allow herself some joy at the long-awaited announcement. Excited questions began to explode from her. "When is it due? Can I still go bowling? How much should I eat? What—"

"Stop, stop!" Dr. Gordon laughed and held up his hand. "Don't worry. You've got the best doctor in Burton County. I'll tell you all you need to know when I'm not two hours behind schedule. Make an appointment for next week. Meanwhile, you can do whatever you usually do. Okay?" He looked relieved at the way she had taken it. "Oh, and I hope things work out with your husband."

Her fears returned at this benediction and alloyed themselves with the joy that had come to her. She thanked the doctor and left quickly. For the second time that day, but not as boldly as before, she stepped out into the enchanted sunlight.

On the way home she saw some children building a snowman. She tried to imagine a little boy—with Mark's blond hair and her own freckles—out there patting down the sides and screwing in the buttons. He'd run up to her excitedly and tug at her scarf to bring her down to his level. She'd wipe his nose as he told her all about it. Then he'd dash off again to watch the taller boys put on the face. That was a dream Frances would have been afraid to give in to before, but now she welcomed it happily. If only Mark would share her happiness!

When she reached home, she made all the usual preparations to make the breaking of the news to Mark easier. She broiled a couple sirloins, got out the best china, and put on his favorite dress. Now she was as ready as she would ever be. Anxiously, she listened for him to come home.

At last she heard the gritty sound of the car on the gravel drive, the weary shuffle of Mark's step, the swish of the storm door, and—Frances couldn't wait. She ran up to him on the stoop and hugged him hard. Between the shock and the slipperiness of the ice, Mark nearly fell.

"Wow, I haven't been greeted like that since you scratched the Chevy. All right, do I get the story now or after my steak dinner?"

I've got to tell him now, thought Frances, while he's in a good mood. She led him inside silently and hung up his coat and hat. She must have looked worried, for his eyes had become harsh x-rays penetrating her mind.

"Frances, it's something serious, isn't it?"

"No, Mark." She tried to smile. "It's really very good news." Mark frowned skeptically, put his hands on his hips, and tapped his fingers impatiently against his belt. Okay, she thought, no psychological smoothing of the way. Lets get it over with. "Honey, I'm going to have a baby!"

Mark stood absolutely still. He wasn't expecting that. After a long minute of intense deliberation he drew back his lips in what failed to be a smile. "Well, that *is* a pretty mess. But there's no need to worry.

We can get it fixed. I know a doctor in New York who—”

“Fix it? *Fix* it? Just like you fixed the car! As though this is just another minor tragedy that can be remedied with a little trouble and a price.” Frances was horrified. “No, sir. I’ve waited a long time for this baby, and I’m going to have it.”

Mark didn’t shout, but his words contained a quiet fury. “Then perhaps it will replace a husband.”

She pleaded with him. “I know how strongly you feel and how angry you must be, but things will work out. It might be a boy, and we could call him Mark Allan, after you.”

“A choice, Frances. The baby or me.”

She trembled. “I want you, but I’m not giving up my baby.”

Mark’s face grew livid. Without a word he stormed to the closet, jerked on his coat, and opened the front door.

“Mark, where are you going? Your dinner’s waiting. Mark? Please don’t leave me. I love you.” Her voice trailed off.

She heard the violent slam of the door, and then the tinkle of shattering ice. Her chandelier. Could she ever put the pieces together again?

## TACTFULLY WORDED LETTERS

John Weber

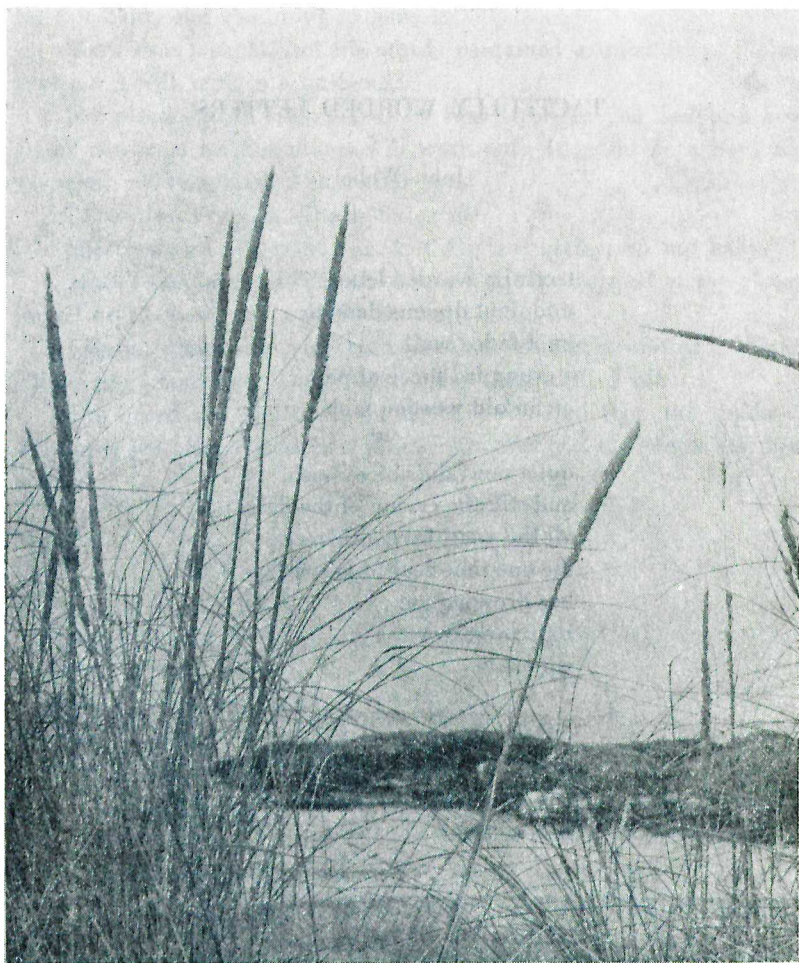
tactfully worded letters  
midnight dreams dancing  
on a faded wall  
a crumpled piece of paper  
on an old wooden table.

quiet now, the voices hush,  
and still the crying of the dawn;  
all the youthful confidence  
the one-time zeal of yesterday  
has dropped me  
into tomorrow  
with

only a name  
and

half a face.





## ALONE ON THE KEY\*

by Carolyn Gilliam

It is sunset on Sand Key. The hot Florida sun is almost gone, and the winds rustling in off the Gulf are blustery and testy. Hardly anyone comes out to Sand Key on a weekday, and those who do usually leave once the heat of day is past. This is quite a contrast to the ultra-commercial Clearwater Beach a few miles away, with its black-topped parking lots, rows of nondescript motels, and brazenly bare girls with skin the color of peeled tomatoes. There is nothing on Sand Key except a few piers, a few bathers, and the greedy, shrieking gulls.

The moment of peace comes but once or twice a year. I must recognize that it is there and appreciate its presence, or it will pass me by. First, I forget that a few yards away my parents, grandparents, brother, and dog are getting ready to head back to town. Delicately, I pick my way out to the water; I watch carefully for pieces of driftwood and broken shells. As I reach the edge of the sea, a petite wavelet shyly creeps up to my feet, and the bits of sand and shell roll off, tickling me slightly. The next midget wave is braver. It laps up around my ankles and runs back out, taking some of the sand out from under my feet. To show how bold they are, the subsequent swells snatch more and more sand from me until there is virtually nothing left to stand on. I finally have to move over.

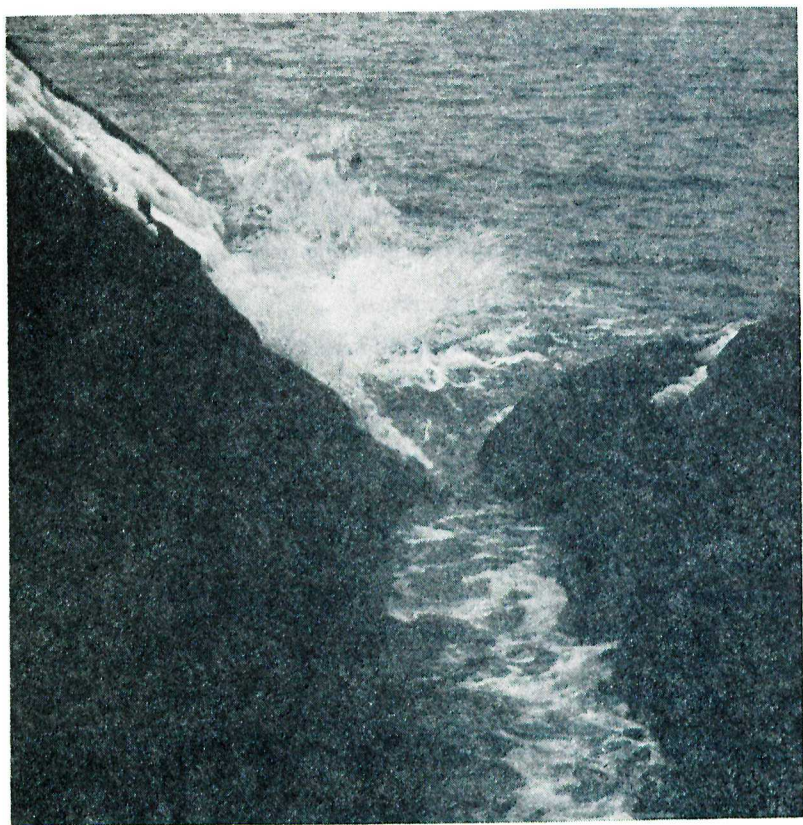
The wind also has to prove itself. It rustles and thrusts past me, letting me know that I am no obstacle to it. It picks up my hair, plays with it, then lets it whip around my neck and shoulders. My beach jacket flutters at its will, flopping and slapping my backside. It pushes me backwards a little; and, having exhibited its might, it moves on. I shiver imperceptibly.

I turn my attention to the diligent little sandpipers, methodically skittering up and down the beach hunting for something to eat. They usually do not come out until evening. Maybe that is because the overbearing sea gulls are blatantly begging and carousing during the day. They are decidedly arrogant birds. The sandpipers, though, are so timid, yet confident. I am big, and they do not know what I am, so they stay away. Still, in their quest for dinner, they are utterly

businesslike, trying to ignore me, always bustling about, devouring a morsel, bustling about, devouring another morsel, bustling about . . .

Once more, the wavelets have run away with the sand that was under my feet. In deference, I move over again. Now I look out to the horizon. I have saved the best for last; the sun is about to drop off into the sea. In a last effort to remind the world that it is still the boss, it has painted the sky with its own extravagantly peculiar colors. There are streaks of yellow, orange, electric pink, and other innumerable, indescribable hues. The sun itself is sitting out on the water, staring at me with its pinkish-orangish-reddish eye. As I watch, it winks out under the surface, leaving the brilliant explosion of color as testimony that it will return. The gleaming blue-black of night descends, crushing the sun's artwork into the water. Daddy, or someone, has sneaked up to get a snapshot of this. My mood is broken, and I turn away.







## WEDNESDAY\*

Linda Ireland

It was on a Wednesday  
a Wednesday  
A hot dry sticky Wednesday  
The third of June.  
All the people in the town remember that Wednesday.  
Just at siesta time when merchants put their wares away  
and dogs panted and children played shouting in the dusty road  
on a Wednesday,  
A swarming horde of black flies  
that roared with the noise of a thousand bees  
circled in the street among the sleepers.  
Then we all woke up on that Wednesday.  
I remember.  
You were there, too  
and  
you said to me, My, how hot it's getting.  
I looked at you but I didn't see you at all.  
I was taking in all the sights and sounds of that Wednesday.  
And I wondered where all the flies came from.  
No matter, you said.  
Just a rotting piece of fruit.  
Three little girls in faded torn cotton dresses skipped rope in the  
dusty street  
while the old men still slept.

Just three left  
all the others awake  
Looking at but not seeing the angry horde of black flies.  
It was on a Wednesday  
a tired sweaty Wednesday  
when the entire town seemed to be sleeping  
and snoring hot snores of dusty warmth.  
Yes, it was that Wednesday when it happened.  
Now they were all awake  
all of them but Señor Pascal  
who was still motionless under his serape in the marketplace.  
Then Wednesday heard the cry of a woman addressed to Pascal.  
What did she want, now?  
Ah, yes, now I remember  
She wanted to buy a watermelon.  
The swarm was leaving. Good, now I feel better, you said.  
Maybe to awaken him, she tapped his shoulder  
and his limpness collapsed, wetting down the dust.  
It was a Wednesday—you do remember, don't you?  
The crowd flowed over him now.  
He was rather like a watermelon himself  
without the benefit of seeds or peel to hold his body together  
Crowded over as he had been just a bit before.  
I shaded my eyes to the hostile sun and tried to see them  
but they were gone away somewhere for another conquest.  
Of course you remember.  
It was a Wednesday in the beginning of June.  
That horrid Wednesday  
The Wednesday of the swarm.

## ROOM FOR BART

Phil Dorrell

It was late Saturday afternoon and Bart smelled good things coming from the kitchen. He wandered in and leaned up against the counter, watching his mother peel and cut potatoes. Her wrinkled hands worked methodically. Bart had watched her do this many times, but he was not interested in watching today. "Mom, do you love me?" he asked.

Without looking up she said, "Of course, dear. Will you please get the milk out of the refrigerator?"

"I mean, would you miss me if I were gone? Do you *really* love me?" persisted Bart. He got out the milk carton and handed it to her.

"Yes. I said so, didn't I? What more do you want?"

She started up the electric mixer and began to whip the potatoes. The grinding whir filled the room. "What a racket," thought Bart. He poured himself a glass of milk and grabbed a cookie from the cookie jar. He stared out the window over the sink. Its familiar green curtains framed a clear spring day outside. Bart could visualize himself and his father playing pitch and catch in the back yard. "Gee, what fun that used to be," he thought. But it had been several years since they had done things like that together. He was seventeen now, and a high school senior. His father ran his own business supply store six days a week. And, well, they both had plenty of things to keep them busy. The noise from the mixer stopped and there was silence for a moment. Bart was still looking outside when he said, "Mom, do you love the Overtons next door?"

"Oh, I suppose I like them pretty well . . . we get along. Now, dear, please don't spoil your supper with those cookies. I'm not cooking this for nothing, you know."

"But I mean *love*, Mom, not *like*. You know, 'Love thy neighbor.' That kinda thing. Don't you think there ought to be a lot more love in the world?"

Bart's mother looked straight at him. She placed her hands on his shoulders and said, "Look, son, if you've got some cock-eyed idea about running off and joining one of those hippy communes or something, you can just get it out of your head right now. Understand? And as

for this love business, why don't you ask Rev. Black about things like that? Why do you think we've been taking you to church for all these years, anyway? Now . . . scat!" She pointed toward the living room. "I've got work to do, and you know your father likes his supper on time."

Bart stuffed his hands in his pockets and shuffled toward the other room. Just then his father, a balding man of average height, came in the back door. He had already loosened his tie and was carrying his jacket over his shoulder. For some reason he was moving rather slowly this evening.

"Hi, gang," he said. He stopped long enough to peck his wife on the cheek.

"Hello, dear," she said. "Supper will be ready in a few minutes."

"Hi, sport," he said to Bart.

"Hi, Dad. How about a game of catch before supper?"

"Oh, Bart!" said his mother. "Can't you see your father's tired?"

"Not tonight, son. Maybe some other time, eh?"

Bart thought that he was also tired. He was tired of hearing the same excuse time after time.

"I wish," said Bart's mother to his father, "that you didn't have to work on Saturdays so much, dear."

"Yeah. But you know how hard it is on the small businessman these days. I can't afford to hire anyone else. And I'd be a fool to close up on Saturdays. It's just something we'll have to live with." He walked to the hall closet and hung up his jacket. Then he plopped down in his favorite easy chair to read the paper. Bart sprawled out on the sofa and stared at the ceiling.

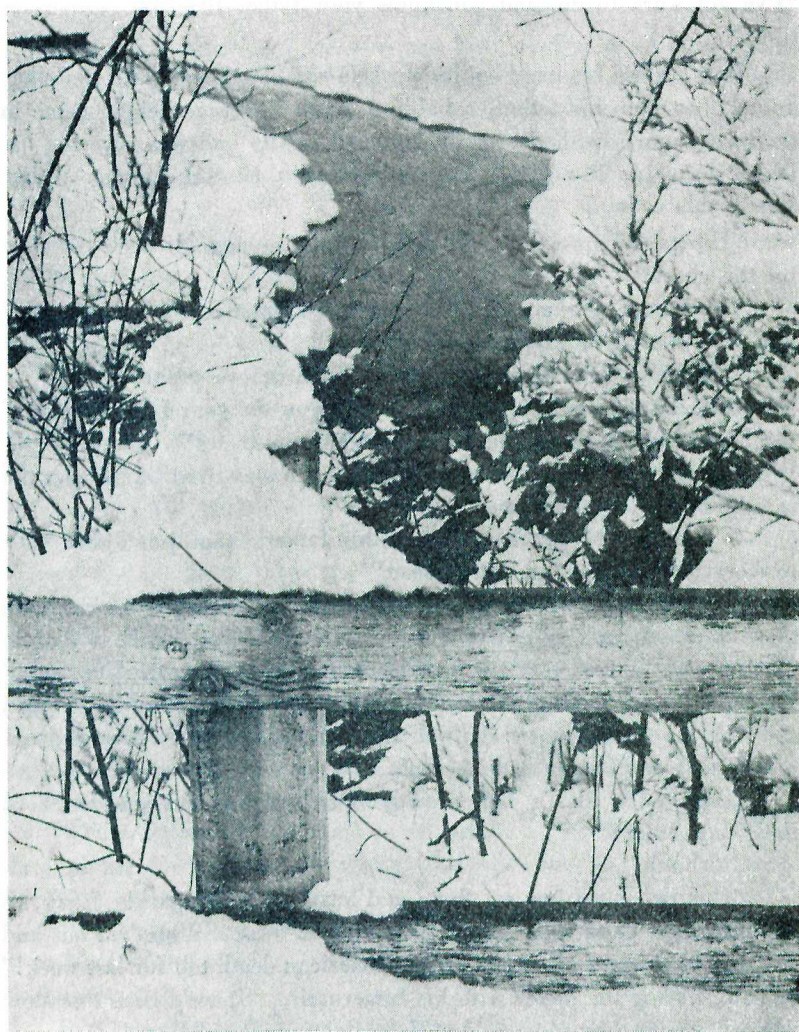
Disgustedly, Bart's father said, "Did you see this article about the Peace Talks?"

"Unhunh."

"Our delegates just sat there and let them stall again! I say we should forget the Talks and go in there full force. Wipe 'em out and get the mess over with. Look at this American death toll for last week!" he said, hitting the paper with his fingernails. "If we'd been this slow when I was in the army, we'd still be fighting World War II."

"Well, I hope I never get drafted," said Bart sitting up. "I don't think I could kill anybody. I . . . I just wouldn't be able to pull the trigger."





"Yeah, well you'd better not let me catch you burning your draft card or anything when you get one. No son of mine's going to be a dirty draft-dodger. I wasn't a traitor and neither are you."

Bart looked at the floor. He did not attempt to answer his father. He heard the noisy rustle of the paper as his father opened to the second page.

"Supper's ready," called Bart's mother.

They all went into the dining room. Bart's fourteen-year-old sister had finally gotten off the phone long enough to eat. Together, she and Bart repeated the grace. "GodisgreatGodisgoodNowwethankHimfor ourfoodAmen."

Later that evening, Bart and his steady girlfriend, Nancy, went to a party at a friend's house. Bart was driving Nancy home in the family car when she said, "Sure was a nice party, tonight, wasn't it?"

"Yeah. I haven't enjoyed myself so much in a long time," said Bart.

"Remember when Judy and Bill fell down playing that one game?" she said giggling. "I thought I'd never stop laughing!" More giggles.

"Yeah. That was funny," said Bart. He gave a short chuckle.

"And then Fred and Cathy . . ." Giggles. "And then when we were playing charades . . ." More giggles. "I think it might have been nicer, though, if Cathy hadn't invited Jim and Sally," she said more seriously. Then in a rather hushed tone, she said, "I mean, they *were* the only niggers there."

"What?!" said Bart. "I never heard you use that word before!"

"I didn't *mean* anything by it. That's what they are, aren't they?"

"But Nancy! That word has some terrible ideas behind it." They arrived in front of Nancy's house and Bart stopped the car. "Besides, I happen to like Jim and Sally. At least they don't go around calling us 'whitey.'"

"So you don't like my choice of words, huh?" snapped Nancy.

"No. In fact, I don't!" said Bart. "And I wish you'd watch it from now on!"

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah!"

"Well, mister! We'll just see who's gonna boss me around!" She jerked Bart's class ring off her finger and threw it at him. "There! You can have your crumby old ring!" She opened the car door,



slammed it behind her, and ran up to the house.

Bart was stunned. He looked at his ring for a moment, and then put it on his finger. He started the car and drove away slowly, as he always did when he wanted to think. After the initial shock was over, he decided that maybe breaking up with Nancy wasn't so bad after all. "We'd never be able to get along, now that I know she's so prejudiced," he thought. "And besides, I was getting pretty sick of the way she giggles all the time. Everybody at school thinks she's stuck up, anyway. I'm probably better off without her!"

When Bart got home, his parents were sitting in the living room watching television. "Well, look who's here!" quipped Bart's father. "What brings you home so early tonight?"

"Uh, well . . . Nancy and I kinda had a fight, and uh . . . well, she gave me my ring back."

"What on earth did you *do* to the poor girl?" asked his mother.

"Nothing. Honest. Uh, I'd rather not discuss it. Actually, I think I'm probably better off unattached. Things just didn't work out, that's all."

"Well," said his father, "In a couple of days you'll probably try to make up with her, I'll bet. Won't you? I was really happy when you two started going together. It seemed like such a good match. And besides, Nancy's father has a lot of influence in this town. He's one of my best customers."

"Is that all you ever think about?" snapped Bart. "I should date whoever's best for business. Is that it?"

"Bart!" said his mother. "Don't talk to your father like that. I know you're upset about losing Nancy. But have some respect."

"Listen, boy," said his father. "I've worked pretty hard for seventeen years to put clothes on your back and food in your stomach. But if you expect to be able to go to college, you'd better start thinking about the business once in awhile. It's more important than you think."

There was a moment of silence. "I'm going to bed," said Bart quietly. "Good night."

As he started downstairs to the room they had fixed up for him in the basement, his mother called after him. "Bart. I'm glad you came home early for a change. You really ought to more often, don't you think? I wish you'd get more sleep."

Bart didn't answer.



The next morning, the family got up to go to church. Bart's father got the Sunday paper from the porch while his mother started to fry some bacon. Bart's sister came into the kitchen. "Mmmm, smells good, Mom."

"Thank you, dear. Would you please wake your brother?"

"If I can. You know what a heavy sleeper he is." She walked down the steps to Bart's room. "Bart. Time to get up." There was no answer. She knocked on the door. "Bart, are you awake?" She knocked louder. "C'mon, Bart! It's time for breakfast!"

She opened the door. The bed was empty. She looked to one side, then gave a piercing scream, loud and shrill and agonizingly long. Hoarsely she cried, "Mother! Daddy!"

They were already running downstairs in their bathrobes. Bart's father was there first. "What's wrong, dear?" he asked.

She sobbed violently and pointed. Then she ran into her father's arms. There, hanging by a rope tied to a floor joist, was Bart's lifeless body.

His mother ran in and saw her son swinging gently back and forth. "Oh, dear God! No! she screamed. Her voice was harsh and tears flooded down her terror-stricken face. "What has that girl done to you?" She fell on Bart's bed in heaving sobs and buried her face in the covers. "She's not worth it, Bart! She's not worth it!" Her voice trailed off into bitter weeping.



## THE FUNERAL

Antonio Criscimagna

He spoke not  
a word  
    when first  
he heard.

Then facing  
time he saw the  
ceremony well enough

a cancelled face.

Black and white he spoke  
in detail  
after color then

a silent parade  
and did not touch again



## LOVE—A FRIEND\*

Dawnie Noble

Love is only a friend that passes by  
    sometimes smiling and warm,  
Ready to lend a helping hand—but sometimes  
Cold, unfriendly and cruel.

Love is a long talk, a secret smile, a wink,  
A firm hand, a short hug—But  
Then Love's mood changes to a short glance,  
    brief words, a quick turn—  
Little things that are so small but hurt so much.

But then a true friend, a true love, rises above  
The invisible barrier, Hate, and an infinite bond is made.  
Then Love is greater than a friend—  
It becomes Life.

## IMAGINATION IN A CHILDHOOD ASPIRATION\*

Stan Landfair

Standing in the hallway, the young boy squares off his stance in a line perpendicular to the wall. He breathes a heavy sigh, bends forward at the waist, bends his knees slightly, and with a poised and graceful motion swings a stick effortlessly forward. Twice, and once more, he repeats the routine, settling at last into a tense, cocked position, his hands holding the stick slightly below his right shoulder, well in front of his body. One more sigh he breathes before he turns his head down and to his left, focusing attention deep within the full-length mirror on the wall.

And in his mind's eye, he grows: the skinny ribs and shoulders are now full, emanating from them an aura of carnal power. The sneakers, torn and dirty, are now of shiny black leather, and eighteen metal spikes dig into the dirt. With dignity the blue and white pin-striped flannels cover his thick, steel thighs and torso. Over his heart is a dark blue crest—NY. Walls no longer surround him, for he feels and smells the crisp October air, and views the well-groomed grass, the white chalk lines, and, in a hazy unfocused periphery, a myriad of faces. Yet all transposes in an instant, such that the deep concentration is unaffected. And this masque remains reality until after a mighty swing, a crack of hickory against horsehide, and the sight of a shrinking white pellet soaring far from view. With the boy's self-conscious shrug of the shoulders and his sheepish smile, the illusion disappears.

## THE PLASTIC FLOWER\*

Carolyn Gilliam

Mrs. Handcock snapped awake and silenced the raucously buzzing alarm. She lay back again and looked over at Mr. Handcock. He was still sleeping gracelessly. His hair was standing up, his mouth was hanging open, soft snoring sounds came from his throat. "Gracious," she thought. "How gauche. I'm glad I don't look like that when I sleep." She wandered into the kitchen, plugged in the percolator, then wandered back into the bedroom and shook the sleep from her husband. While waiting for him to fully wake up, she went into the adjoining bathroom, and with the skill born of years of practice, she quickly put on her face. Mr. Handcock looked at her as she came out. Often he remarked on how nice she always looked in the morning.

After a hectic hour, she managed to get her husband and children off to work and to school. She certainly was glad that Brendonwood School could afford its own fleet of school buses. It would have meant considerable inconvenience to have to drive the seven blocks to take the children to class each day and then pick them up again. This way she was free to devote more time to her civic activities.

This afternoon she was expected to attend an important meeting of the Ladies' League for American Society. A few young black people were coming in from the ghetto to talk to the ladies. She would have to dress appropriately for this occasion. That new pantsuit would do marvelously. It was very young looking, very now, very today. With it she would wear her lovely suede boots. After she was dressed, she surveyed herself in the full-length mirror. Ah, the effect was perfect. The young image came through; it was probably the boots that did it.

Driving to the clubhouse, she thought over how beautifully laid out the community of Brendonwood Bluff was. Everything had been planned and landscaped faultlessly, unlike the nearby city, where everything was so willy-nilly. She entered the meeting house conscious that she looked right, even down to her figure. It was a very nice figure, considering her forty-one years. She watched her weight and had only a little bit of flabbiness, but that her long-line bra and all-day girdle could disguise.





While they waited for the guests to arrive, the women discussed the last episode of *All in the Family*. They wondered how Archie could down-grade the Jews so. Of course, the race did have its bad points, but one really should look for the virtues in people. The Jews were, after all, industrious, shrewd, and thrifty, and those traits could not be considered faults.

The black youths arrived, and the meeting came to order. This was really not a meeting. It was more of a rap session between the ladies and the ghetto people. They talked about slum conditions. Mrs. Handcock said that she thought more parks and recreation centers should be built. That would keep the kids off the streets and out of trouble. One of the visiting girls, whose name was Emily, gazed at Mrs. Handcock. On the subject of busing, Mrs. Handcock declared that, in the long run, it was a good thing. Segregation had to be ended. She would be happy to send her children to a public school, but there were just no good ones in Brendonwood Bluff. Emily stared at her. She then said that at least in her husband's firm, there was no discrimination. If a Negro applied for work, he was given careful consideration. If he had the qualifications, he would surely be hired and could even work his way up to a position of responsibility. Seeming to look right through Mrs. Handcock, Emily quietly asked,

"Who are you?"

"Marilyn Handcock," she replied, surprised.

"Who?"

"I'm . . . Marilyn Handcock," she repeated uncomfortably. She averted the girl's penetrating eyes.

Mrs. Handcock was glad when the meeting was over. It had been an important meeting and quite significant, but those young slum people had made her very uneasy. She was relieved to get out.

It did not bother her that it would be past six o'clock by the time she got home. Her husband and children would already have been home for some time. She would have to think of something quick and easy for dinner before she got there. Oh yes, she had some chicken pot pies in the freezer. They would do fine.

Mrs. Handcock's evening was uneventful. After dinner, she finally managed to finish *The Invisible Man*. "How very profound," she said to herself as she closed the book. "I wonder how many of the ladies have already read this." She would have to remember to bring it up at the next League meeting.

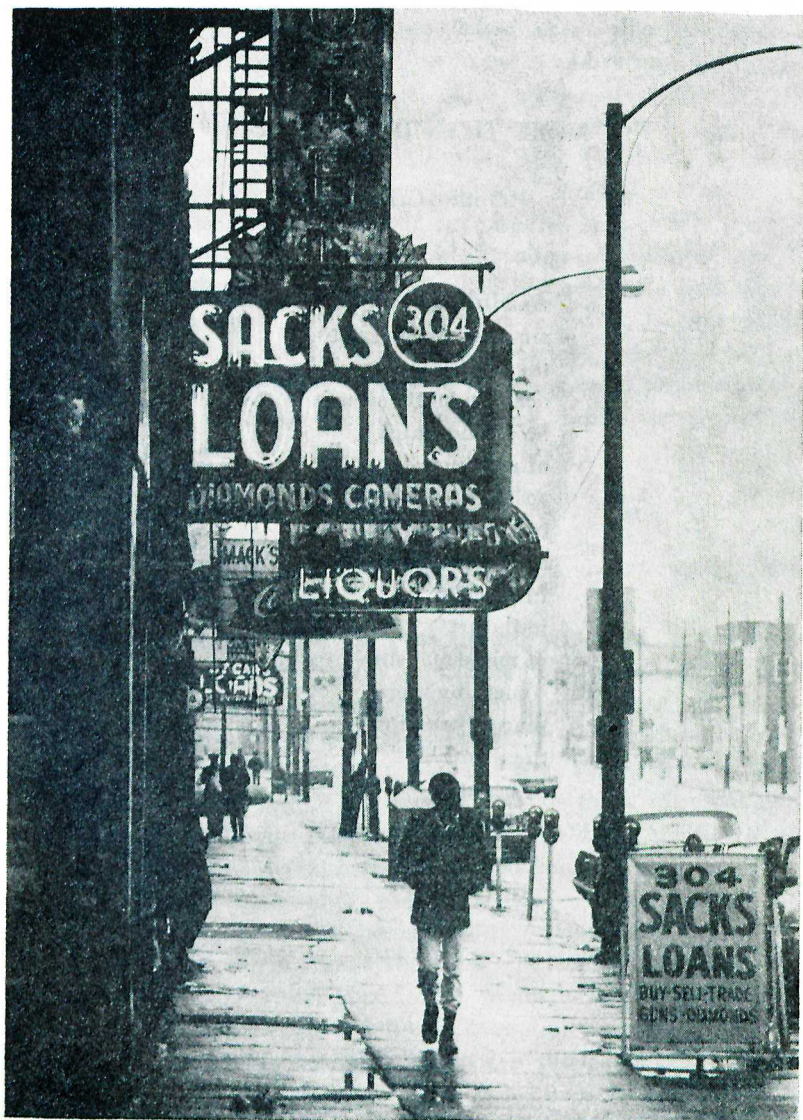
By then it was time for bed. She took a quick bath, then tiredly creamed her face off. She shook two Sominex from the bottle, gulped them down, and climbed into bed next to Mr. Handcock, who was already sleeping peacefully. With her sleep mask in place, Mrs. Handcock quickly became drowsy and slid off into slumber.

## MORE THAN DESTRUCTION

Antonio Criscimagna

As bird and shot swing  
simultaneously split  
the marksman  
dead on target swears  
he did not think  
of anything but  
accuracy before  
two arches in  
a final rhythm held  
fulfilment  
in the art  
of marksmanship creating  
something more  
than destruction is  
the form  
of beauty  
and was gone







## ON THE CORNER

Francia Harless

The two stood on the corner, leaning against the window of a shabby grocery store. The little one had pink rollers in her hair, half-covered by a rag. A fancy black dress with gauze sleeves hung straight down from her shoulders like a sheet. Thin, naked legs protruded from the dark and shapeless mass. They were ashy white, tinged transparent blue from the cold. Her arms were folded tightly across her body, little red hands tucked into the folds of black at her sides. Her face was pinched and blank, as if she were trying to pinch inside the fright that looked out of her eyes. Her companion, Big Donna, had on a long, pink and green flowered dress, stretched so tight it almost pushed her big red breasts out of the low, square neckline into the cold. Her crude ankles stuck out at the hem, her feet pushed into scuffed white shoes. Bright orange hair frizzed straight out from her head. Her upper lip was painted shiny red; the lower one was dark red from being chewed. Beneath their mask of lime-green shadow, her darting, nervous eyes closely watched the street.

## A CHILD'S WORLD\*

Mary Beth Anderson

Imagination is like the color red. It brightens anything dull in much the same way that red brightens a painting of grays and browns, a woolen plaid, or the scenery in autumn. Imagination is a red spark that can set the mind on fire and bring about revolutionary ideas. Imagination is like the blood that keeps us alive; it is a stream of life whose circulation leads to creativity and the beginnings of dreams. Yet, somehow, the world of imagination belongs to children. Just as the color red seems most appealing when thought of in terms of a new pair of school shoes, a shiny little dump truck, or a big balloon, so does imagination seem to be the freshest when it is fancied by the child.

During my years in high school, I sponsored my own little dancing school to earn my spending money. My students ranged in age from four years to fourteen years, and I devoted three afternoons a week in an attempt to teach them what dancing is all about. One of the most important elements of dance is interpretation and story-telling. Along with being able to perform intricate steps, a dancer must be able to take on any personality or character in order to tell his story. In other words, a dancer must have imagination. Although lack of coordination made learning steps very difficult for my younger students, they shone when it came to interpretation. Delightful as "squishy" marshmallows, they were just as believable as wooden soldiers. They could imagine themselves to be anything from graceful snowflakes to clumsy elephants. In contrast, my older students would take no part in this sort of activity.

An interesting fact to point out is that the age when my students became inhibited coincided with the age when most children find out that there is no Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, or Tooth Fairy. I feel that this has a great deal to do with imagination being pushed aside. I can remember from my own childhood how disillusioning it was to

find out that there was no Santa Claus. I had had such a firm belief in him, and, suddenly, this belief was shattered. It is no wonder that children as they grow older become more inhibited. They are not about to let themselves be fooled again, and, as a result, imagination and make-believe become childish activities, something to outgrow.

Another important factor is that at this same point in the life of a child, approximately the early part of the third grade, very little is done in school to stimulate imagination. Play-doh and much of the fun and games are set aside to tackle seriously the problems of reading, writing, and arithmetic. If any art work is done, it is usually copying a work already completed by the teacher, or coloring mimeographed pages.

I do not mean to say that imagination never survives childhood, because it is obvious that it does. *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and Disneyland are two examples of imagination at its greatest. One does not find many adults with a great deal of imagination, though; and, in adults, it is usually too late to develop this sense. The only solution, I feel, is through the education of the child. "Sesame Street" and new experimental schools are a step in the right direction. Other school systems should follow in their footsteps. Dance classes and arts and crafts classes, such as wood workshops, should be made as important a part of the curriculum as the essential academic courses. With opportunity a child can exercise and maintain that special innate ability to imagine. Only if provided with the proper crayon can a child color his world red.

### A CHILDHOOD MEMORY REVIVED\*

Stan Landfair

Spain has left me with many memories. Most of them, however, are not real. Inspired by pictures, the mind of my older years has created them, taking a single slide or snapshot, inserting itself behind



the face of that stocky, crewcut, rosy-cheeked boy and re-enacting for just an instant a scene from those forgotten years, a single frame from a reel of film, alone and out of context. With only several of these isolated, sporadically interspersed acetate scenes left to revive it, nearly a fourth of my life lies hidden from me this way. Lacking both detail and the before-and-after passages, these pictures seem to me almost as meaningless as a book's middle chapter. Collectively, they leave but one lasting impression: that of the red tile roofs and white stucco walls of our home, surrounded by well-groomed gardens, and contrasted above by the always blue sky, below by the thick green grass that in retrospect would seem anachronistic in Spain's dry and barren Andalucía.

In this setting one act does return to mind without probing. It occurred down the road from that home, where several houses were under construction. It was readily visible that these buildings would be, in military tradition, exactly like mine. Set in exactly the same fashion were the carport, the courtyard, and, visible through the holes in the wall which were to be windows, the rooms inside.

With the black-haired boy from across the street, I watched the construction. He was the boy who day after day pushed me out of my swing, the boy who I in turn beat to the ground, the boy whose arm I bit so hard that it bled. He was the same boy who, with his gum-machine penknife, put the scar, which still exists, on my brother's nose. Yet, through the common fascination found in the building of a house, he and this younger version of myself found it fit to stand together and watch. Watching the Spanish workmen, we amused ourselves for an endless time. We watched, I idly and he repeatedly tossing and catching a sprinkler nozzle of a garden hose, as two of the Spaniards carried each end of a picture-window size sheet of plate glass. With perfect accuracy, the black-haired boy threw his toy between the two men and through the sheet of glass.

The immediate confusion leaves me to wonder even now what next transpired, but I remember with the vividness of a picture as the boy's sister, who appeared from nowhere, interjected between each accusation of her brother an accusation of me. The workers, though, were not to be dissuaded, as they had seen all. Four abreast, the boy, his sister and the two men marched up toward the boy's house. Assuming he was "in for it," I walked home.



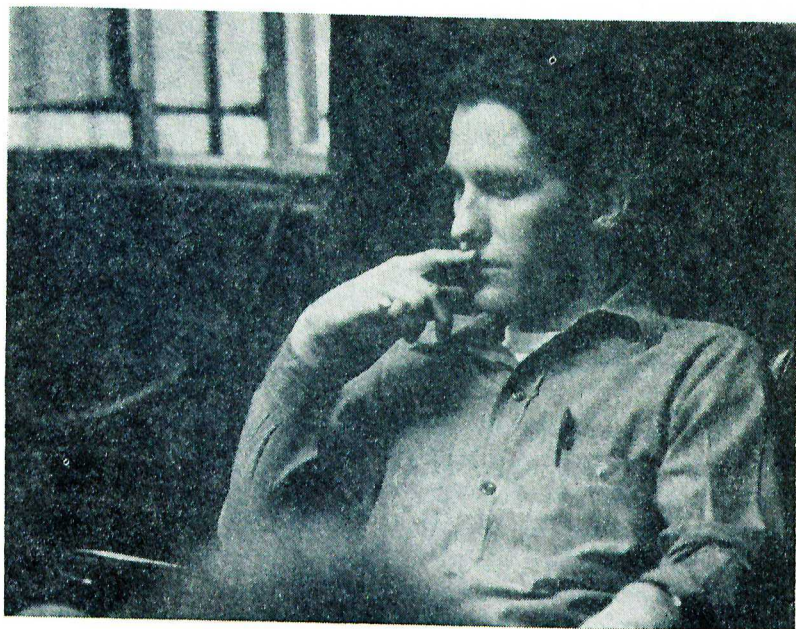
Hours passed before I thought more about the incident. Perhaps, had the workers not appeared at our door, I would not remember the incident now. Unable to collect restitution from the culprit, they now sought it from me. They laid their charges before my parents that I had broken the glass. Innocent, I protested endlessly. It seemed hours. In the end, however, I capitulated. It seemed hopeless. I admitted my "crime" to my parents, who paid for the damages and punished me twice—once for the act and once for lying.

It was years before my parents and I discussed the real story, but I had yet to forget a single detail. The ordeal had impressed me deeply, because each time I was in a position to defend myself, I was reminded of it. It taught me to stick to my guns, to defend truth to the end, trusting that inevitably the truth will be known.

## LIFE BEHIND BARS\*

Tom Isenbarger

The slightly pink eyelids slowly raised and then dropped. His cheek muscles twitched. Once more the eyelids slowly opened and closed immediately. A bird sang in a tree outside the window. The scarce tracks of eyebrows were drawn down in a full squint, and the pinkish eyelids opened halfway. Simultaneously, the eyelids and scarcely visible eyebrows were raised. Two large, brown eyes slowly appeared as the lengthy eye-lashes were drawn apart. The chirping of the sparrow outside aroused him from the dullness of his heavy slumber. Through the bars he could see the shadow of the tree outlined by the window. He stretched and yawned as if to shake off the remaining drowsiness. He was awake.



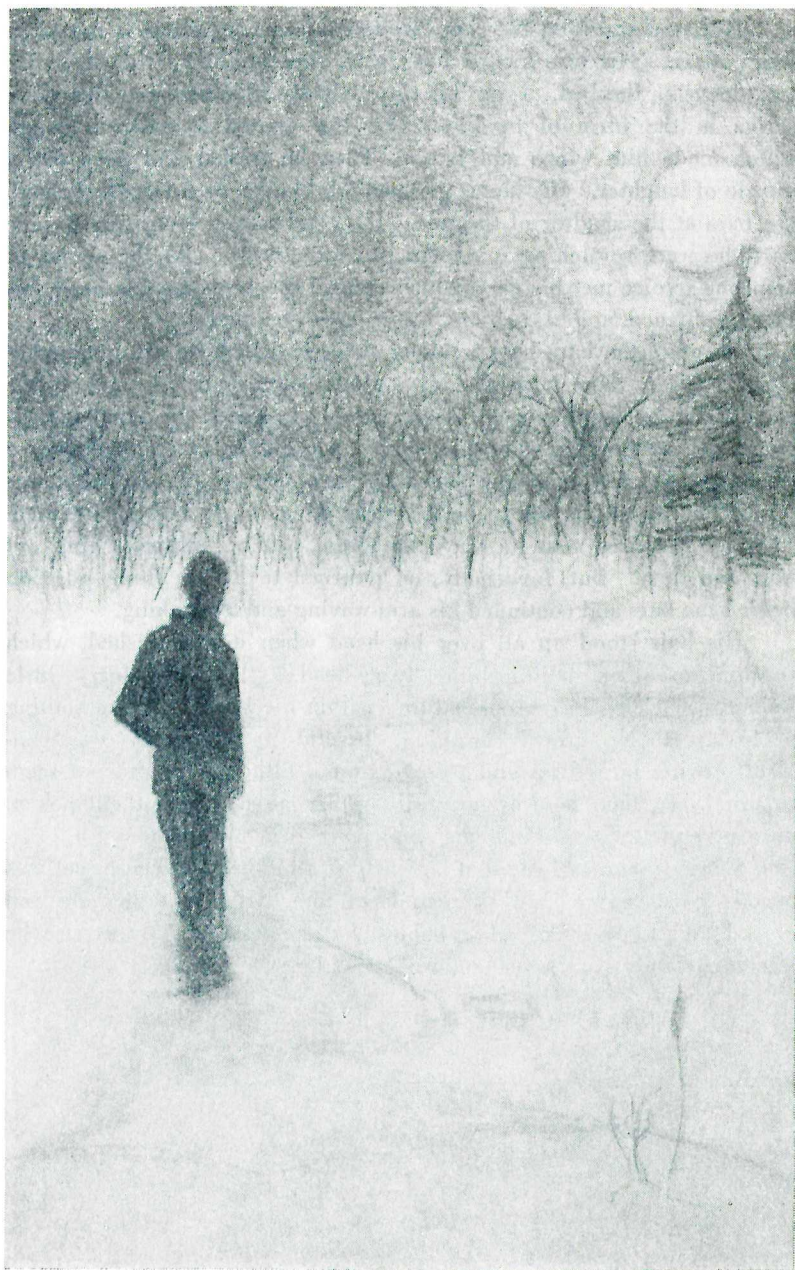
His eyes surveyed the room while his arms jerked in a meaningless pattern. His legs kicked forcefully, first one, then the other, up and down on the bed. From his tiny, slightly blistered, red lips came saliva in the form of bubbles. The lips parted to expel a cough which made him wince and frown. Then he smiled and gave out a gurgle of laughter. His hands grasped the blanket as he gazed through the bars at the shadow of the tree. His head moved from side to side as if he were scratching it on the bed underneath. As the sound of someone's voice met his ears, which seemed too large for his head, his face brightened, and his two big, brown eyes glistened.

Through the bars he saw many shadows which he did not understand. Often, very large shadows would come and go; and at the same time, he heard voices. Being unable to speak the language, he could not understand what was said. Nor did he care, for it was a great hunger that appealed most to him. Since his appetite was larger than most, he had to be fed quite often in order to be satisfied. This job required that he leave the bars, and he enjoyed being out now and then. But, invariably, he returned to his reclining position behind the bars and continued his arm-waving and leg-kicking.

His hair stood up all over his head when it was washed, which resulted in some calling him "fuzzy-head." Like the fuzzy little shadows that closely surrounded him within the bars, he knew nothing of his or their "fuzzy" condition. Invalid in nature, he was constantly being picked up and tossed around, although he did not seem to mind. In fact, he was generally rather quiet and not outspoken, unless the matter was of extreme importance—such as eating.

I guess you could say that he was just a big baby, because that was exactly what he was, all 14 pounds of him. He slept and ate and moved and looked like other babies, but he was special because he was ours, Cindy's and mine, and we loved him.







## 4.6.72

John Weber

A layer of ice soothes the abrasions of the pond;  
'Neath the stench of the skin the heart throbs still;  
The frosted outer countenance hides tensions within;  
While in the darkened wilderness birds sound shrill.

Incessantly on the threshold, life lies askance,  
Flushed down waterless gorges and filtering through rocks;  
Then, like a stream, the heart falls, too,  
Drowning in the paradoxes of life that it mocks.

The wood burned bright 'neath the fury of light.  
Relegated now to darkness, cold and compromised is youth;  
Hammered into the desolation of the moon-drenched night,  
A lonely frozen statue slowly awaits the truth.

## BUB BOWIE

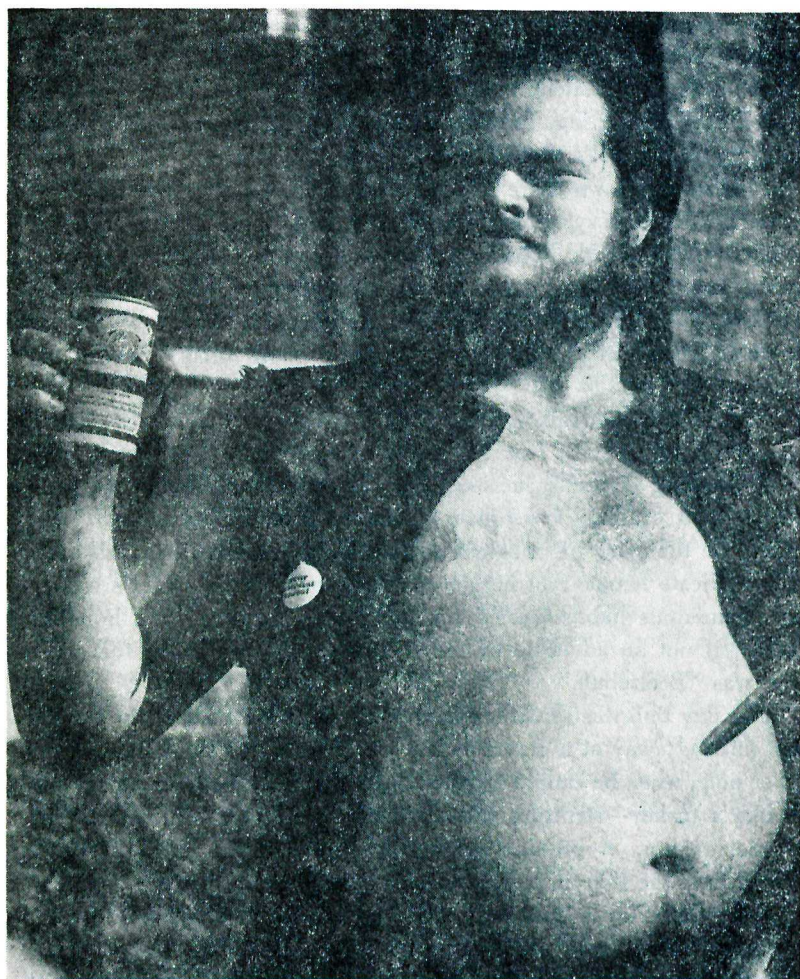
Elisabeth Harter

[Found among the papers of the late Bartholomew Dibble, past Overseer of Christ the Healer Tabernacle and Secretary of the Mt. Ararat Historical Society. His researches concerning the background of the town have been collected in a small volume entitled *Hark Ye to the Ark*, which made the Good Book Association's best-seller list in 1931. The old patriarch died shortly after its publication. In spite of the somewhat heretical nature of certain passages, his memory is held dear by the townsfolk, who have gone so far as to spin his likeness into the doily dust-covers manufactured in the lace factory, thus assuring him a kind of immortality on earth as well as in Heaven. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. . ."]

Whoever visits Mt. Ararat, Illinois, cannot fail to notice the imposing spire of Christ the Healer Tabernacle. The uplifted finger of admonition dominates the town, points out the path to salvation for the farmers in the surrounding plain, and even serves as a spiritual landmark for navigators on Lake Michigan—whenever the fog withdraws its misty breath.

The town itself was founded on the lake by Joshua Powers and his 5000 disciples in 1901 as a theocracy of the Divine Healing Society. A flood of anti-smoking, anti-drinking zeal swept this ark of crusading Christians away from the corrupt and sinful city of Chicago to a land of milk and honey. The lake, symbolic remnant of that flood, still laps at the east side of town as a reminder of God's providential deliverance.

At the center of town, the limestone tabernacle has sent down its roots to take a strong hold in its ten-acre grounds. Solid, immovable, enduring, it represents the fixed beliefs of the citizens. In contrast to the silent, unchanging tabernacle, the business district bustles with the industry of hard-working merchants. Except for the conspicuous absence of any taverns, drugstores, or medical offices, it is typical of most Midwestern downtowns. Closer to the lake, the





famous lace factory, worked by skilled artisans imported from England, drones with contented activity.

The rest of the town, from Aaron Avenue to Zebulun Drive, is laid out in streets as straight and narrow as the residents of the modest homes along them. Pale chimney smoke, the only kind of smoking permitted under the municipal ordinances, rises like incense from these pious homes, imparting, as it halos the church spire, an ethereal quality to Mt. Ararat's skyline.

In this very town there lived, not many years after the death of Joshua Powers, a lazy, good-for-nothing young rogue by the name of "Bub" Bowie. Yes, he lived in Mt. Ararat, but no one could tell you exactly where, although it was a well-known source of consternation that Bud could frequently be found at midnight in the graveyard by the water, communing with "spirits" (of the fluid form) behind the stones.

Certain it is that Bub was hardly a great favorite among the good wives of the village. In fact, his eating of forbidden bacon; his practice of smoking cigarettes across from the schoolyard, where an awe-struck crowd of little worshippers gathered round after school; and (perish the thought) his insolent spitting on the sidewalk in full view of any delicate female that happened along, even the overseer's wife—these scandalous habits gained for him the reputation of a hopeless heathen, if not an advocate of the Devil himself, for Bub's full nickname was "Beelzebub."

One day Bub was slouching against the shingled wall of the barber shop, puffing away at a cigarette and lazily watching the twists of the barber pole, when he caught sight of Sister Naomi Plott coming toward him like a turkey—strutting with difficulty owing to her over-stuffed posterior region. A mischievous smirk spread over half of Bub's freckled face, the side turned away from Sister Naomi, as he recognized the opportunity for a little fun. She had seen him—he could tell by her pained attempt to avoid looking his way. Just as she reached him, Bub collected all the saliva he could suck in, slid the pool to the front of his mouth, and spat out the juicy missile. It landed in a perfect slimy puddle on the ruffled hem of Sister Naomi's long dress. Furiously she whirled on him, her crooked arthritic finger going off at all angles before the tip finally pointed at his nose.

"God will punish you, you little heathen," she cried shrilly, her



flabby red neck quivering back and forth like a turkey's. "God will shower his vehemence upon you." Which was precisely what she was doing to him as she spluttered and spat angrily in his face. "Tonight, young man, tonight you will reap what you deserve!" With that warning, Sister Naomi smoothed her ruffled feathers and stalked off indignantly. Bub just stood there and laughed in a jeering falsetto.

That night, heedless of Sister Naomi's warning, Bub cradled a bottle in his arms and set out for the graveyard just as the full moon slid into the sky like a pat of melting butter in a hot skillet. He wriggled between the wrought-iron rails of the fence and settled himself in the long shadow of the towering marble monument of Joshua Powers. Bub took in the scene before him. The eerie light of the moon gave long black tails to the attentive gravestones, which seemed to be perked up like startled cats in apprehension of something supernatural. On the lake, the waves rushed in silently, betraying their presence only by the moonbeams bouncing to and fro on their crests. The silver stillness was strange.

Bub shivered, popped the cork on his bottle, and tilted his head to receive the warming liquid. But suddenly, before the glass touched his lips, the sky shattered with lightning and thunder, the lake began to slurp like a ravenous wolf licking its chops, and a mighty hand reached down to snatch the bottle away. Cowering with fear, Bub looked up and found himself small and insignificant beneath, not the stone, but the towering form of Joshua Powers himself, garbed in black!

"Bub Bowie!" The commanding voice rolled with the thunder. "God's finger of accusation points at your heart, and his wrath hangs over your head like a tangled nest crawling with hundreds of tiny, contorting, ooze-skinned, hard-jawed worms, all eager to infest your body and eat it away.

"O, you sinner, consider the terrible fate which awaits you on that final Judgment Day, when in a *second* God can consign you to *eternal* torment in Hell. There a perpetual, pounding stampede of full-grown elephants will trample you forever into a mangled pulp. Look at the mighty wrath of God, deserving sinner, and gnash your teeth!

"And yet, O wicked one, there is no need for despair. Salvation lies in obedience to God. I exhort you, be on fire for the Lord! He needs laborers for the vineyard, soldiers for the crusade. He is calling *you*, Bub Bowie, to spread the Good News to the wicked cities of the

earth. Are you willing to go? All you have to say is, 'Here am I; send me.' "

Terrified, Bub sat rigid under the spell of such powerful eloquence; he couldn't speak.

Thunder crashed. "The worms are wriggling to escape. They're ready to drop on your unprotected head. What is your answer? Now!"

Bub started and took his thumb out of his mouth. "Here am I; send me," he quavered. Immediately all was still, just as before, only the moon had climbed overhead and Bub no longer sat in shadow.

Ever since the storm, no one in Mt. Ararat was ever troubled by Bub again. He had disappeared, with no clue as to his whereabouts, except that Sister Naomi insisted she heard a familiar voice that night—crying in frenzy through the newly-washed air—"I'm off to convert New York!"

Even to this day the townspeople, who have built up quite a legend around this little clue, never hear a thunderstorm of a summer evening but they say Joshua Powers has stirred from his grave to convert a hardened sinner.

